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**THE RIVERS SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® MASSACHUSETTS BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 20, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Azar Swain of The Rivers School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Swain is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from The Rivers School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the court, distinguishes Swain as Massachusetts's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Swain joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Karl-Anthony Towns (2012-13 & 2013-14, St. Joseph HS, N.J.), Dwight Howard (2003-04, SW Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln HS, Texas), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood HS, Calif.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington HS, Colo.) and Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame HS, Calif.).

The 6-foot, 185-pound senior guard averaged 23.1 points, 6.1 rebounds, 2.6 assists and 1.9 steals per game this past season, leading the Red Wings (20-7) to the New England Prep School Athletic Council Class B tournament semifinals. The NEPSAC Class B Player of the Year, Swain was the co-MVP of the Independent School League and a three-time First Team All-ISL selection. He concluded his prep basketball career with a school-record 2,185 points.

Swain has volunteered locally as a mentor and tutor to inner-city student-athletes and on behalf of the Special Olympics. He has also donated his time as a youth basketball counselor, coach and referee. "I have always said that if I need to put the ball in a player's hand with a chance to win the game, then that player would be Azar Swain," said Tony Teixeira, head coach of Roxbury Latin School. "There is no kid that has embodied winning and impacts the game in so many different ways as Azar does."

Swain has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade award's broad criteria. He has made a verbal commitment to attend Yale University, where he will play basketball, beginning this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Swain joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Basketball Players of the Year Eric Sellew (2015-16, Concord-Carlisle High School), Guilien Smith (2014-15, Catholic Memorial High School), Tyler Nelson (2013-14, Central Catholic High School), Tyler Gibson (2012-13, Rockland High School), Rene Castro (2011-12, Worcester Academy), Pat Connaughton (2010-11, St. John's Preparatory School), Nate Lubick (2009-10 & 2008-09, St. Mark's School), Stevie Mejia (2007-08, Lawrence Academy), and Mike Baldarelli (2006-07, Holy Name Central Catholic High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Azar will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit www.gatorade.com/poy.

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